

Hurricane Katrina's Effect on New Residential Sales Frequently Asked Question (FAQs)

What is the effect of Hurricane Katrina on new residential sales for September?

The effect on the National and regional estimates is minimal.

Has the reliability of New Residential Sales changed since Hurricane Katrina?

No.

Are there any estimates that will be withheld or delayed because of data collection problems?

No.

What estimation procedures are being modified to compensate for Hurricane Katrina effects?

For building permit offices in the most devastated areas that we were unable to contact and did not report September data, we assumed no permits were issued. For projects in the Survey of Construction that did not report for September, we assumed they have no change; those that were for sale are still being treated as for sale.

Did New Residential Sales modify the seasonal adjustment procedures for September?

No. The review of the seasonal adjustment output and diagnostics did not indicate that adjustments to the options were necessary.

Does New Residential Sales produce estimates for the affected sample areas?

No. The survey is designed to produce only national and regional estimates. Data are not available at the state or local level.

Did you change your analytical procedures in September?

No.

How has the Census Bureau modified data collection procedures for New Residential Sales in affected areas?

Rates of new home sales are obtained from the Survey of Construction, a sample survey of new housing units from 900 permit jurisdictions and from a sample of land areas where permits are not required. Most of the areas significantly affected by Hurricane Katrina are not in the Survey of Construction sample, so there has been minimal impact on the data collection for new home sales. Data from the Building Permits Survey are also used in the estimation of new home sales. September data collection for that survey proceeded as normal;

however, there was a small increase in the number of non-reporters in the affected areas.

What is New Residential Sales planning for future months to effectively capture the impact of Hurricane Katrina on New Residential Sales estimates over time?

For the Building Permits Survey and the Survey of Construction, we will be closely monitoring our existing sample to ensure that we pick up accurate estimates of the reconstruction expected to take place. The Survey of Construction is used to determine the rates of sale of permits that have been issued. The survey assumes that the rates of sale in the sampled jurisdictions in each region are representative of the entire region. While new permits in most of the affected areas will not be surveyed to determine when the houses are sold, the sales will be included in the estimates because of their inclusion in the building permit estimates.